

(g) The expression of any personal view, argument, opinion, or the making of any statement which publicizes the fact of a representational election and encourages employees to exercise their right to vote in such an election, corrects the record with respect to any false or misleading statement made by any person, or informs employees of the Government's policy relating to labor-management relations and representation, will not, if the expression contains no threat of reprisal or force or promise of benefit or was not made under coercive conditions—

(1) Constitute an unfair labor practice under any provision of this subpart; or

(2) Constitute grounds for the setting aside of any election conducted under any provision of this subpart.

§ 9901.917 Duty to bargain and consult.

(a) The Department or appropriate Component(s) of the Department and any exclusive representative in any appropriate unit in the Department, through appropriate representatives, will meet and negotiate in good faith as provided by this subpart for the purpose of arriving at a collective bargaining agreement. In addition, the Department or appropriate Component(s) of the Department and the exclusive representative may determine appropriate techniques, consistent with the operational rules of the Board, to assist in any negotiation.

(b) If bargaining over an initial collective bargaining agreement or any successor agreement is not completed within 90 days after such bargaining begins, the parties may mutually agree to continue bargaining, or either party may refer the matter to the Board for resolution in accordance with procedures established by the Board. At any time prior to going to the Board, either party may refer the matter to FMCS for assistance.

(c) If the parties bargain during the term of an existing collective bargaining agreement, or in the absence of a collective bargaining agreement, over a proposed change affecting bargaining unit employees' conditions of employment, and no agreement is reached within 30 days after such bargaining begins, the parties may mutu-

ally agree to continue bargaining, or either party may refer the matter to the Board for resolution in accordance with procedures established by the Board. Either party may refer the matter to FMCS for assistance at any time.

(d)(1) Management may not bargain over any matters that are inconsistent with law or the regulations in this part, Governmentwide rules and regulations, issuances and implementing issuances, or Executive orders.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in § 9901.910(d), management has no obligation to bargain or consult over a change to a condition of employment unless the change is otherwise negotiable pursuant to these regulations and is foreseeable, substantial, and significant in terms of both impact and duration on the bargaining unit, or on those employees in that part of the bargaining unit affected by the change.

(3) Nothing in paragraphs (b) or (c) of this section prevents management from exercising the rights enumerated in § 9901.910.

(e) If a management official involved in collective bargaining with an exclusive representative alleges that the duty to bargain in good faith does not extend to any matter, the exclusive representative may appeal the allegation to the Board in accordance with procedures established by the Board.

§ 9901.918 Multi-unit bargaining.

(a) Negotiations can occur at geographical or organizational levels within DoD or a Component with the local exclusive representatives impacted by the proposed change.

(b) Any such negotiations will—

(1) Be binding on all parties afforded the opportunity to bargain with representatives of DoD or the Component;

(2) Supersede all conflicting provisions of applicable collective bargaining agreements of the labor organization(s) affected by the negotiations; and

(3) Be subject to impasse resolution by the Board under procedures prescribed by the Board. In resolving impasses, the Board will ensure that agreement provisions are consistent with regard to all similarly situated employees. The determination as to

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which organizations are covered under multi-unit bargaining is not subject to review by the Board.

(c) When agreement is reached under this section, individual bargaining units cannot opt out of or veto the agreement.

(d) Any party may request the services of FMCS to assist with these negotiations.

(e) Labor organizations may request multi-unit bargaining, as appropriate. The Secretary has sole and exclusive authority to grant the labor organizations' request.

(f) The Department will prescribe implementing issuances on the procedures and constraints associated with multi-unit bargaining.

§ 9901.919 Collective bargaining above the level of recognition.

(a) Negotiations can occur at the DoD or Component level with labor organization(s) at an organizational level above the level of exclusive recognition. The decision to negotiate at a level above the level of recognition as well as the unions involved, is within the sole and exclusive discretion of the Secretary to determine and will not be subject to review.

(b) Any such agreement reached in these negotiations will—

(1) Be binding on all subordinate bargaining units of the labor organization(s) afforded the opportunity to bargain above the level of recognition, and on DoD and its Components, without regard to levels of recognition;

(2) Supersede all conflicting provisions of other collective bargaining agreements of the labor organization(s), including collective bargaining agreements negotiated with an exclusive representative at the level of recognition, except as otherwise determined by the Secretary;

(3) Not be subject to further negotiations with the labor organizations for any purpose, including bargaining at the level of recognition, except as the Secretary may decide, in his or her sole and exclusive discretion; and

(4) Be subject to review by the Board only to the extent provided by this subpart.

(c) When agreement is reached under this section, individual labor organiza-

tions or bargaining units cannot opt out of or veto the agreement.

(d) Negotiations will be subject to impasse resolution by the Board under procedures prescribed by the Board. In resolving impasses, the Board will ensure that agreement provisions are consistent with regard to all similarly situated employees. The determination as to which organizations are covered under national level bargaining is not subject to review by the Board;

(e) The National Guard Bureau and the Army and Air Force National Guard are excluded from coverage under this section. Where National Guard employees are impacted, negotiations at the level of recognition are authorized.

(f) The Secretary may require and a labor organization or organizations may request bargaining above the level of recognition, as appropriate. The Secretary has sole and exclusive authority to grant such requests; and

(g) The Department will prescribe implementing issuances on the procedures and constraints associated with collective bargaining above the level of recognition.

§ 9901.920 Negotiation impasses.

(a) If the Department and exclusive representative are unable to reach an agreement under §§ 9901.905, 9901.914, 9901.917, 9901.918, or 9901.919, either party may submit the disputed issues to the Board for resolution.

(b) The Board may take whatever action is necessary and not inconsistent with this subpart to resolve the impasse, to include use of settlement efforts.

(c) Pursuant to §§ 9901.907 and 9901.926, the Board's regulations will provide for a single, integrated process to address all matters associated with a negotiations dispute, including unfair labor practices, negotiability disputes, and negotiation impasses.

(d) Notice of any final action of the Board under this section will be promptly served upon the parties. The action will be binding on such parties during the term of the agreement, unless the parties agree otherwise.